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RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 3471
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 4142
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 5207
RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA PRIORITY 1283
RUEHJA/AMEMBASSY JAKARTA PRIORITY 5099
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 6610
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO PRIORITY 4079
RUEHMS/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT PRIORITY 1144
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 6698
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 8583
RUEHOT/AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY 6518
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 6172
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 2230
RUEHSM/AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM PRIORITY 7980
RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY 6311
RUEHVI/AMEMBASSY VIENNA PRIORITY 9380
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY
INFO IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHSW/AMEMBASSY BERN PRIORITY 6498
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL PRIORITY 3264

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 STATE 094757

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/11/2019
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PROP](#) [PTER](#) [CASC](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: DEMARCHE REQUEST: URGING IRAN TO RESOLVE
MISSING/DETAINED AMCIT CASES

REF: A. 09BAGHDAD2181
[B](#). 09PARIS1046
[C](#). 09ASHGABAT993

Classified By: NEA A/S JEFFREY FELTMAN FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#). (U) This is an action request for Embassies Abu Dhabi, Ankara, Baghdad, Berlin, Brasilia, Canberra, Doha, Jakarta, London, Mexico, Muscat, New Dehli, Oslo, Ottawa, Paris, Rome, Stockholm, The Hague, Vienna, and the U.S. Mission to the European Union. Please see the action request in paragraph 5.

[2](#). (C) SUMMARY. The Department is closely monitoring the cases of six American citizens, Shane Bauer, Sarah Shourd, Josh Fattal, Kian Tajbakhsh, Reza Taghavi, and Robert Levinson, who are missing or unjustly detained in Iran. We ask action posts to raise these cases with relevant interlocutors and request their assistance in urging Iran's leadership - through the local Iranian Embassy and/or the host country's mission in Tehran - to resolve these six American cases as a humanitarian gesture. The Secretary demonstrated the USG's concern in her August 15 statement calling for the safe return of all missing or unjustly detained American citizens to the United States as quickly as possible so that they can be reunited with their families. END SUMMARY.

Rationale

[3](#). (S) The Department is directing selected posts to request assistance from the host government (and from Brussels in the case of USEU) in pressing the Government of Iran to resolve the cases of six American citizens who are missing or unjustly detained in Iran, namely: Robert Levinson, who disappeared in March 2007 on Kish Island; Kian Tajbakhsh, who has been in prison without formal charges since July 9, 2009 (also imprisoned in 2007); Reza Taghavi, who has been in

prison without formal charges since May 26, 2008; and Shane Bauer, Sarah Shourd, and Josh Fattal, who have been detained since July 31, 2009 when they were hiking near the Iranian-Iraqi border.

¶4. (S) The goal of the demarche is to secure support from a diverse range of diplomatic allies who can positively influence Iran's decision making on this critical issue, with arguments solely based on humanitarian grounds rather than political, to try to take the issue out of the bilateral context.

Action Request

¶5. (C) Posts are requested to approach appropriate host government officials as soon as feasible and request assistance in urging the Iranian government - through the resident Iranian Embassy and/or the host country's mission in Tehran - to release the six American citizens as a humanitarian gesture. Post should draw from the points in paragraph 7, which may be left as a nonpaper.

Objectives

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¶6. (C) Posts should seek to achieve the following:

-- Emphasize the United States' commitment to the protection of American citizens abroad.

-- Convey that international interest in the six cases will remain high until a just outcome is reached.

-- Request the host government's assistance in pressing the Iranians to release the six Americans as a humanitarian gesture and sending Iran a message not to politicize their cases.

Talking Points / Non-paper

¶7. (SBU) Begin talking points / nonpaper:

-- Ensuring the safety and security of American citizens overseas is a priority for the United States. As demonstrated in Secretary Clinton's August 15 statement, the United States is deeply concerned about the welfare of our American citizens who have been detained or are missing in Iran. We once again urge Iran's leadership to quickly resolve all outstanding American citizen cases.

-- This includes the case of the American scholar, Kian Tajbakhsh, who has spent his career working to enhance mutual understanding between Iran and the United States. The government of Iran should immediately release Mr. Tajbakhsh from detention and allow him to depart Iran.

-- Regarding the three American hikers, Joshua Fattal, Shane Bauer, and Sarah Shourd, who were detained by Iranian authorities on July 31, we once again call on the Iranian government to live up to its obligations under the Vienna Convention by granting consular access and releasing these three young Americans without further delay.

-- Reza Taghavi was taken into custody on May 26, 2008 and remains imprisoned without formal charges. The government of Iran should immediately release Mr. Taghavi from detention and allow him to depart Iran.

-- We also remain concerned about the case of Robert Levinson, who has been missing in Iran since March 9, 2007.

We call on the Government of Iran to provide any and all information it may have on his whereabouts and to assist in ensuring his prompt return to the United States.

-- Our goal is to ensure the safe return of all our missing or unjustly detained American citizens to the United States as quickly as possible so that they can be reunited with their families.

End points

Background

18. (C) The hikers: On July 31, Iranian authorities detained Shane Bauer, Sarah Shourd, and Josh Fattal while hiking near the Iraq/Iran border. On August 11, the Swiss Ambassador to Iran received confirmation by phone of the detention of three American hikers from the Iranian Vice Minister for Europe, however, repeated requests by the Swiss for consular access and information on their status have been denied. The Swiss Ambassador and SPP continue to follow up with the MFA and the

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Iranian Mission in Bern with little success. Having given the Iranian government time to resolve the case quietly, the families are now publicizing their concerns about their children's welfare and have enlisted Congressional and other support. The Secretary released a statement on August 15 on the five AmCit cases in Iran (the hikers, Tajbakhsh, and Levinson).

19. (C) Kian Tajbakhsh: Iranian authorities arrested dual U.S.-Iranian citizen scholar Kian Tajbakhsh in his home in Tehran on July 9 and he remains in prison. An expert on urban planning, he used to work in association with the Open Society Institute. He has not been formally charged nor granted access to an attorney. In 2007, he was arrested along with Iranian-American scholar Haleh Esfandiari on charges of endangering Iran's national security and released four months later. According to Iranian media, during the August 1 show trial Tajbakhsh and Iranian-Canadian Newsweek reporter Maziar Bahari both "confessed" to being part of a conspiracy funded by Western NGOs and propagated by the media to bring about a victory for Mousavi. Tajbakhsh's family is actively raising his case with the media and has consistently requested USG involvement in doing the same.

110. (C) Reza Taghavi: Iranian authorities arrested dual U.S.-Iranian citizen Reza Taghavi in his home in Tehran on May 26, 2008 and he remains in prison. He has been accused of espionage and fomenting a "velvet" revolution, although no official charges have been lodged against him. He was initially held in the political section of Evin Prison, but has since been moved to the "normal" section of the prison. The Taghavi family initially did not seek USG involvement, due to the potential negative affect it could have on his case. The family changed their minds following the cancellation of his court hearing on August 10.

111. (C) Robert Levinson: The former FBI agent was last seen on Kish Island on March 9, 2007. Although the Iranians consistently deny knowing what happened to Levinson, we have strong reason to suspect that he is being detained in Iran. Levinson family members continue to lobby for greater USG activity and media attention to the case. On March 31, 2009 on the margins of the UN Conference on Afghanistan at The Hague, Secretary Clinton passed the last official correspondence on Levinson urging the IRIG to use all of its facilities to ensure his safe return to the U.S.

Reporting Requirement

¶12. (U) Post is instructed to report the results of its efforts by September 18.

Point of Contact

¶13. (U) Department POCs for follow-up are: Michael G. Spring, NEA/IR, 202 647-2513, SpringMG@State.gov; and Brianne Marwaha, CA/OCS, 202-647-6135, MarwahaBC@State.gov

¶14. (U) Department thanks posts for its assistance. Please slug all responses for NEA/IR P, and the NSC.
CLINTON